America's Nicest City? The Contentious Politics of Care and Punishment for the Homeless in Columbus, OH

Honors Research Thesis

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By

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I. Introduction

This research seeks to investigate and problematize the notions of care and punishment that constitute experiences of homelessness in Columbus, OH. Through a qualitative case study of the constellation of service providers, advocates, policy-makers, and law enforcement officials who work to define and respond to the crises of homelessness, I explore the interplay of punitive and service-based responses to homelessness as they unfold in Columbus, OH—a city that has been nationally hailed as a leader for implementing service-based strategies for addressing the challenges of homelessness and as a model city for enacting constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness. The objective of my research is to answer the question: how are the politics of anti-homelessness and criminalization of homelessness characterized within what has been termed one of America's nicest cities?

My objective is not to confirm or disprove whether or not Columbus is in fact the nicest, most accommodative, or even the most effective city when it comes to addressing the crises of homelessness. Rather, my goal is to examine the ways in which notions of care and punishment have been defined, perceived and marshaled by various actors in order to understand how and by whom is this binary is constructed and contested through law, policy, and service provision. Put simply, my interest is not asking whether or not Columbus's response to homelessness has been mean or nice, punitive or supportive, or whether the city's approach has reflected anti-homeless or the apparent counterpart pro-homeless sentiment, but instead asking what these terms mean to decision-makers. How is homelessness itself defined, and how does this inform responses? What are the conceptual

and empirical limits of care and punishment, and who decides? What are the points of contention? How have different actors perceived their role in facilitating or providing care or punishment? How do conventional divisions of law enforcement as the site of punishment and advocates and service-providers as sites of care manifest empirically on the ground? Whereas an extensive literature exists on the politics and performances of care for the homeless within the spaces of shelters (Cloke et al 2008) and transitional housing (Willse 2012) and laws and policies that criminalize, exclude, and marginalize homeless people within urban space (Davis 1992, Mitchell 1997, Beckett & Herbert 2009), my research examines the nexus and interplay of sites traditionally associated with care (shelters, soup kitchens, transitional housing) and punishment (police, private security) in order to understand how knowledge about homelessness is mutually constituted and transferred. In order to engage with these questions and processes, I focus specifically on initiatives within the city of Columbus aimed at developing constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness.

I hope to highlight how policies and programs that may seem unique to the city of Columbus reflect wider neoliberal discursive constructions of homelessness and cannot be de-coupled from uneven capitalist geographies and trends within the retributive carceral state. I suggest that in order to engage with these questions and understand the increasingly complex and ever-evolving landscape of homelessness the division between care and punishment must be destabilized and decoupled from assertions about normative intention to attend to the interplay and production of care and punishment on the ground.

With these questions in mind, I will proceed in the following way. First, I will provide an overview of my research methodology and explain my rationale for conducting

an ethnography of service providers rather than of the homeless. In the second section, I will argue for the material and discursive inseparability of neoliberalism, criminalization, and homelessness and consider the modalities through which both neoliberalism and the carceral state seek to discipline the homeless and other poor and marginalized populations. In the third section, I introduce the case study site of Columbus, present the demographic profile of homelessness in the city, and examine the policies, practices, and institutions that have propelled the city's ascendancy as a constructive alternative to the criminalization of homelessness (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 2012, pages 16-17). I will then explore the contours of Columbus' homeless landscape and interrogate the conceptual limits of care and compassion. I argue that even as the city moves towards the (de)criminalization of homelessness through decisions to not enforce anti-homeless and quality of life ordinances, the alternative care and compassion-based policies advanced by service providers and law enforcement continue to construct homeless bodies as criminal or pathologized 'other' in need of discipline, surveillance, and containment.

II. Methodology

The research methods employed during this project included: (1) interviews with service providers, law enforcement officials, city officials, volunteers, and homeless individuals; (2) participant observation through volunteer work with the annual city-wide Point-in-Time (PIT) count of homelessness; (3) participant observation of police officers in the form of ride-alongs; and, (4) analysis of online news archives, downtown development reports, and data and programming materials released by local advocacy and service

organizations. Additional quantitative data was compiled from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), National Coalition for the Homeless, and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty in order to contextualize homelessness in Columbus within wider trends in policy and law.

By engaging a combination of methodologies, the goal of this study was to assess how divisions between care and punishment were represented in media accounts, organizational reports and policy documents and the extent to which a disjuncture exists between textual representation and policy practices. Additionally, I hoped to evaluate how service and punishment were differentially performed and depicted by service providers, advocates, policy-makers, and law enforcement, to themselves, other members of the governing apparatus of homelessness, and the homeless. Although this study incorporates voices from all key facets of the governing apparatus of the homeless, this study does not pretend to suggest a representative sample. This is in part due to time and resource constraints. More importantly than these research constraints, the researcher does not endorse the notion that an objective representative, non-epistemologically informed sample can ever be achieved.

Interviews

I conducted a total of 20 IRB-approved interviews over the course of roughly two months. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The final sample population was comprised of police officers (n=2), legal advocates (n=3), a representatives from city council (n=1), volunteer service workers (n=2), directors and staff at local homeless and service providing agencies (n=11), and homeless individuals (n=1). Women were

represented in greater numbers (n=14) in comparison to men (n=6). The majority of interviewees were white (n=15), with fewer black interviewees (n=5) and no respondents from other racial groups.

Many of these interviews were arranged through a snowball method, where I received recommendations and contact information for potential future interview subjects while conducting interviews with other affiliated persons. Snowballing between service providers was common and all connections were certainly useful. In general service providers responded promptly to interview requests and were eager to participate without the need to have colleagues vouch for the validity of my project. The recommendations from trusted colleagues and collaborators were crucial for arranging interviews (and later ride-alongs), notably with the Columbus Division of Police. I unsuccessfully attempted to arrange interviews with officers through email and over the phone on four occasions, and was only successful after I was introduced via email by the Chief of the Ohio State University Police Division, Paul Denton, who affirmed that my request was for a "legitimate academic project" and explained that during my interview with him I was "objective, open minded, fair, and very polite" (Officer Denton, Email to author, sent January 22, 2013). Police officers sometimes feel isolated from and hostile towards members of the public and attempt to shelter actions from outside scrutiny, which could explain the lack of willingness to respond to my requests (Spano 2006). As such, having an 'insider' who shares police sentiments of fraternity, order, and safety helped to generate a degree of trust and overcome the some barriers to conducting police research as a perceived 'outsider' (Reiner 2007).

The appearance of objectivity, commitment to empathy and patience, active reflexivity and introspection, and the employment of languages and behaviors similar to those enacted by research subjects have been explained by some scholars as allowing for the retrieval of valid, unmediated ethnographic data (Herbert 2000; Moss 1995). While these actions appear to make interviewees more comfortable and conversations somewhat less awkward, they do not erase the epistemological conditioning and production of the research project. Nor do they review some ontologically pre-existent worldly truth. Instead, I argue not only that the data produced through interviews, as with all knowledge, is situated— always partial, embodied, limited, and mediated by relations of power. As a researcher, I maintain an institutional position of power through my ability to name the categories, control information about the research agenda, define interventions, and come and go as research scientists and cannot escape the power relations that exist between myself and the research subjects (Haraway 1988; Staeheli & Lawson 1995, 332).

Further, as Rose (1997) pointedly articulates, the division between object and subjects, identities, and positions exist in a constant state of becoming and are both produced and constituted by research encounters. This means that attempts at transparent reflexivity by making relations of power knowable and visible and distributional models of power whereby the researcher seeks to give power to research subjects fall short as they overlook the complexity, contingency, and fluidity of power. Put simply, the interview process involves an always-partial performance of identities that negates the possibility for a clear delineation of inside/outside and will always, inevitably be shaped by the researcher's (dynamic and fluid) epistemologies.

Point-in-Time Count

The PIT is carried out annually in January in partial fulfillment of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements to receive financial support for programs that serve the homeless. It represents one mechanism through which the homeless population is made legible to service providers, law enforcement and the public and by which the causes, experiences, of trajectories and responses to homelessness are defined and calculated. The PIT is coordinated locally by the Community Shelter Board and Columbus and Franklin County Continuum of Care Steering Committee and is carried out in accordance with instruction manuals released through HUD's Homelessness Resource Exchange. These materials include guidelines for who should be counted, how to engage specific populations, how each outreach team should record information, and what times of day the count should be carried out (HUD Homelessness Resource Exchange, accessed 1/27/13). The purpose of the PIT is to capture on any given night how many human beings are experiencing homelessness in the community by providing a snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness to get a sense of geographical and demographic changes (Michelle Heritage, Director of Community Shelter Board, interview with author, January 17, 2013).

Historically, the PIT has taken place between the hours of 12am-7am and entailed large teams of service providers canvassing city parks, bus-stops, and tent camps, but this year the Continuum of Care piloted a new strategy to better account for the patterns of youth and women who were less likely to be counted based upon the previous street-count method (*The Columbus Dispatch*, January 25, 2013). The 2013 approach, advertised through flyers and word-of-mouth several weeks in advance, asked homeless individuals to

come to a central location downtown, the Veteran's Memorial Building (on West Broad St. across from COSI) where the homeless would be counted, HUD survey questions would be administered, and homeless individuals received food, clothing, and assistance from roughly 40 social-service agencies offering links to housing, jobs, health care, and other needs. Many organizations sent outreach teams to bring homeless people to the Veteran's Memorial Building or to inform the homeless who did not want to come about available services and opportunities.

My involvement as a PIT volunteer was two-fold as I administered HUD surveys at Veteran's Memorial for roughly an hour and a half and spent the remaining two and a half hours as part of an outreach team for the Huckleberry House, an agency that deals specifically with homeless youth populations. While volunteering, I was able to conduct a total of five interviews: a middle-aged couple who was volunteering for PIT for the first time, a twenty-seven year old homeless woman, the five members of the Huckleberry House outreach team, and two staff members at youth recreational centers (one in Franklinton and the other on the Near East Side) that were visited during the outreach trip.

The purpose of participating in the PIT was to examine how authorities produce knowledges about the homeless and how/if these practices and processes are contested. Again, the emphasis was not to determine whether or not the PIT effectively captured the experiences of homelessness but to understand what information is included and excluded and what normative effects this knowledge should generate. Instead, the goal of this exercise was to assess the performance of calculation and practice of knowledge production as it was represented to the homeless, to other service providers, and to myself.

Police Ride- Alongs

With respect to research on policing, criminologists and legal geographers have written extensively about the benefits of being there for increasing the validity of data and for overcoming the shortcomings of interview data (Spano 2004; Spano & Resig 2006). Within this literature, there are numerous purported advantages to participant observation with officers as opposed to relying solely on interview data. Most importantly, researchers are able to see the geopolitics and territorial practices of the police instead of taking the police officers' word for it (Herbert 1996a; 1996b). Officers are potentially prone to exaggeration, either positive or negative, and by being in the car with officers it is possible to eliminate some forms deception. Further, even if the officer responds to the observer's presence with reactivity, a change in behavior or attitude due to the researcher's presence, the researcher still benefits from the ride-along as she can hear officers interacting with one-another and responding to incidents over the scanner. Indeed, scholars have argued that the only way for researchers to account for reactivity is to treat officer responses to observation not as a compromise to the integrity of the data but as a crucial component of the data itself (Herbert 2001). Further, the ride-along offers the opportunity for extensive conversation between the researcher and the officer—to ask questions about general protocol and to ask follow up questions about arrests made during the shift.

I was only able to conduct one ride-along over the course of the study, so it is difficult to gauge how the officer responded to my presence without a comparative metric. I conducted my ride-along during a third shift, downtown on a Friday evening in February. Over the course of the evening the officer and I responded to a fender-bender, a false security alarm at a bar, and provided back-up to watch an arrestee while another officer

went to file paperwork in the County Clerk's Office. I asked the officer if she thought that she was dispatched less frequently because everyone knew that she had a 37 (ride-along) for the night. She explained that that was not the case, as there were not many dispatches at all over the scanner. She then showed me the logs for other zones of the city that were similarly slow for a Friday night third shift. The lack of activity for the night granted the officer who explained that after nearly ten years on the force, she had substantial experience interacting with homeless people. We traveled to other zones on the Far East and West sides of the city where she otherwise would not have patrolled. We went into two overnight shelters and drove by three others. She also showed me where homeless people sometimes hung out. In short, her geopolitics changed entirely as a result of my presence.

Studying-Up the Homeless

This project draws upon anthropology and geography literature on the practice of "studying up"—to analyze and theorize the institutions, organizations, and bodies that govern human relations rather than to study the governed themselves (Hyndman 2000 xvii). Put simply, the objective of this study project is to produce an ethnographic account of the constellation of policy-makers, service providers, and law enforcement officials that seek to define and respond to homelessness rather than to provide an ethnographic account of the homeless themselves. Following the early work of Laura Nader (1972), this approach has been utilized to examine the devolution of U.S. immigration enforcement (Coleman 2012), bureaucratic politics of asylum seekers in Canada (Mountz 2002), lives of court-involved girls (Schaffner 2006) and harm reduction drug policy in Vancouver

(McCann 2011), but has yet to be applied in the context of spaces of care and punishment for the homeless.

Many existing geographical accounts of homelessness, although well intentioned in efforts to depict the homeless as active agents, fetishize the homeless subject as the object of ethnographic analysis (cf Marr, DeVerteuil, Snow 2009). These studies naturalize notions of the homeless as other and perpetuate divisions of who and what belongs. Others have focused on structures of governance but have depicted urban policy agendas and law enforcement as largely homogenous and overlooked the discontinuities and contestations that constitute the policy-making process (cf Mitchell 1997). These studies not only overlook the multi-scalar constellations of disparate practices and interests that produce the city as an assemblage (McCann 2011), but they also reproduce the powerless victim narrative of the homeless.

By studying up the governance of homelessness, my goal is to explore the contested interplay of everyday processes through which the homeless are made legible and ascribed meaning as legal and political subjects. By approaching the study of homelessness through the lens of a dynamic embodied yet spatially and temporally-situated state my goal is to shed light on the roles of identity, affect, and conflict as they inform policies towards the homeless and shape possibilities for agency and discretion (Mountz 2002; Proudfoot & McCann 2008). At the same time, this approach follows Katz's (1992, 502) call for a re-envisioned ethnography that strategically travels between macro-logical structures of power and the micro-logical textures of power played out in the material social practices of everyday life by attending to the processes whereby knowledge is produced, exchanged, and used within against the grain of social relations.

From this standpoint, studying up through the analytic of the embodied state avoids both the fetishization of the figure of the homeless that is characteristic of many conventional ethnographic studies. Further, an examination of the embodied state highlights the multi-scalar relational processes through which urban policies are produced and transferred as it advances discussions of scale beyond Euclidean nested hierarchies but does not go so far as to adopt the flat-site ontology's conceptual of scale as self-organizing material articulations (Marston et al 2005), which overlooks the ways in which power relations and epistemological claims constitute the study of practices. As a result, the practice of studying up studying up effectively shifts the analytical object of analysis from the othered and undesirable figure of the homeless to the contested processes by which arms of state and city governance seek to ascribe meaning to homelessness. Put differently, my approach focuses on the process of abjection rather than on the abjected.

III. Background

Over the past three decades, the United States has seen a marked increase in the number of homeless people living in both urban and rural areas. By homeless, I am referring to the definition used by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which in accordance with the Stewart B. McKinney Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11301, et seq. (1994), considers a person to be homeless when the individual:

> Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence; and has a primary night time residency that is: (A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or (C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. The term "homeless individual" does

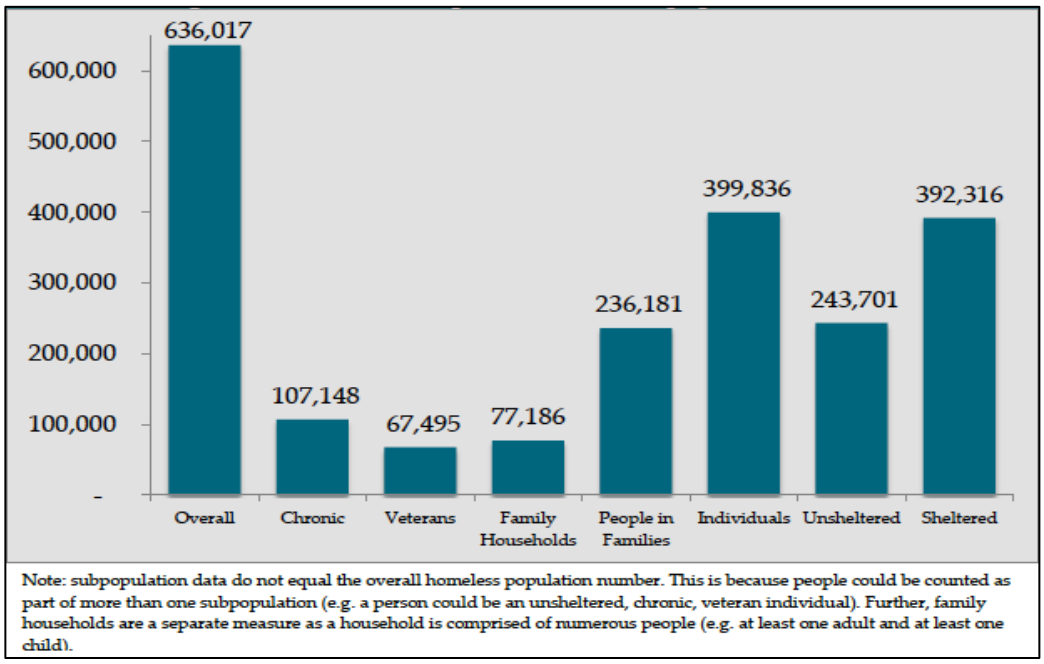
> not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of Congress or a state law." *42 U.S.C. § 11302(c)*

In 1984 the estimated number of homeless people in the United States was between 200,000-500,000 (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1986). Today, this number has skyrocketed to well over one million people. Between 2009 and 2010 approximately 1,593,150 individuals experienced homelessness (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association 2011). As a proportion of the population, the national rate of homelessness in 2001 was 21 homeless people per 10,000 people in the general population with a rate of 31 homeless per 10,000 for veterans (The State of Homelessness in America 2012).

The distribution of homelessness is uneven and is disproportionately comprised of racial and sexual minorities, former veterans, and other populations deemed to be socially undesirable, such as those suffering from mental health issues and addiction. The growth of the homeless population is further marked by a growing number of youth and families lacking permanent shelter. The 23 cities that provided information reported that 26 percent of their homeless population suffered from a serious mental illness. By contrast, only six percent of the U.S. population suffers from a serious mental illness (U.S. Conference of Mayors 2008). In 2003, children under the age of 18 accounted for 39% of the homeless population; 42% of these children were under the age of five (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty 2004). According to the same 2004 study, 25% of homeless were ages 25 to 34; the same study found percentages of homeless persons aged 55 to 64 at 6%. In 2007, the homeless population was 47% African-American, though African-American people made up only 12% of the U.S. adult population. The homeless population

was only 35% white, though white people made up about 76% of the U.S. population (U.S. Conference of Mayors 2007). In addition, 20% of homeless youth are LGBT. In comparison, the general youth population is only 10% LGBT (National Coalition for the Homeless 2009). Further, a significant portion of the homeless population is comprised of released prisoners, who are five times more likely than members of the general population to have a shelter stay (Metraux & Culhane 2004).

Figure 1 Homeless Population and Subpopulations, 2011 (The State of Homelessness in America 2012)



Note: subpopulation data do not equal the overall homeless population number. This is because people could be counted as part of more than one subpopulation (e.g. a person could be an unsheltered, chronic, veteran individual). Further, family households are a separate measure as a household is comprised of numerous people (e.g. at least one adult and at least one child).

The Production of Homelessness

While these statistics demonstrate that rates of homelessness have risen dramatically and disproportionately since the 1980s, the numbers alone do not allow for the full engagement with the question of how the homeless are produced. The existence

and rapid growth of a population of precariously sheltered or unsheltered people is not a naturally occurring or self-evident phenomenon. Rather, the condition of homelessness is the result of the complex amalgamation and negotiation of policies, practices, processes and decisions by actors at the national, state, and local levels. By calling for an examination of the production of homelessness I am referring to two interrelated processes. First, I am referring to the structural and systemic conditions that make the condition of homelessness inevitable for a subset of the population. Second, I am referring to the processes through which the production of knowledge about homelessness is carried out on the ground, how bodies are made legible as objects of policy, and how this knowledge is reflected within responses to homelessness. I argue that attention to both aspects of the production of homelessness is essential both for contextualizing the crisis of homelessness and subsequent responses. In particular, I hope to highlight how the neoliberal government of social insecurity (Wacquant 2009 19)—the socio-historical processes of policy neoliberalization and retributive criminalization have produced and exacerbated the problem of homelessness. Insofar as the dual processes of neoliberalization and criminalization make homeless bodies legible as objects of public and policy scrutiny, inform notions of socio-spatial belonging, and radically shape possibilities for responding to homelessness, and constitute the conditions of care and punishment directed towards this population.

IV. The Neoliberal Governance of Social Insecurity

The increasing pervasiveness of homelessness in the United States and concomitant policy responses reflect neoliberalization and the expansion of the carceral state.

Neoliberalism has been broadly characterized by the rolling-back of Keynesian financial regulations, unions, and state-ownership and the rolling out of new modes of social and penal policy-making concerned with the aggressive reregulation, disciplining and containment of those marginalized or disposed by the deregulation of the 1980s (Peck & Tickell 2002, 389). Indeed, the neoliberal roll-back has been shaped by the institutional logics of economic deregulation and reregulation. The change in regulatory policy situate the market and adherence to market principles as the prime metric by which social policies are evaluated. The roll-back is further characterized by the devolution, retraction and recomposition of the welfare state, characterized by intensified commodification of services and the transition from welfare to workfare whereby the desocialized labor force is treated as clients rather than citizens. The neoliberal roll-out consists of the expansive, intrusive, and proactive penal apparatus to contain the disorders and disarray generated by diffusing social insecurity and deepening social precarity. The expansion of the penal apparatus is partnered with growing support for the cultural trope of individual responsibilization that contributes to the construction of the self, spread of the markets and the proclamation of state irresponsibility (Wacquant 2010, 214). Together, these processes created the conditions by which Keynesian social welfare policies were replaced with bootstrap workfare programs (Peck 1999), cities across the United States abolished Skid Rows and closed single room occupancy (SRO) hotels (Willse 2010), and mental health and psychiatric facilities were drastically defunded and closed at a rapid pace (Sparks 2012). At the same time, attaining access to healthcare and government financial assistance became increasingly more difficult and negatively stigmatized at the same time that rates

of employment, underemployment, and economic inequality were on the rise (Wacquant 2009).

Neoliberalization has resulted in the growth of a desocialized labor force of low income and socially marginalized population of people abandoned by the welfare state and targeted by the penal apparatus, constructed as a threat to social order and in need or containment, surveillance, correction, and disciplining by the service-based "left hand" of the state and its punitive "right hand" (Wacquant 2001, page 402). Wacquant argues that the law-and-order upsurge that has swept most post industrial countries constitutes a "reaction to, a diversion from, and a denegation of the generalization of the social and mental insecurity produced by the diffusion of desocialized wage labor against the backdrop of increased inequality" (Wacquant 2009, xv). The expansion of the penal system serves three functions: (1) the physical neutralization and warehousing of fractions of the working class, (2) establishing the inseparability of the economic and moral through the disciplining of desocialized wage labor, and (3) the reaffirmation of the state to emphasize and enforce the sacred boundary between commendable citizens and deviant categories, the deserving and undeserving poor, those who merit being salvaged and inserted into the circuit of unstable wage labor and those who must henceforth be durably blacklisted and banished (Wacquant 2009, xvii). As Sharon Zukin (1995, 40) pointedly states, "voters and elites…could have faced the choice of approving government policies to eliminate poverty, manage… and integrate everyone into common public institutions. Instead, they chose to buy protection".

The roll-out of the penal apparatus under neoliberalism has propelled the expansion of the United States carceral state—the unparalleled growth of the United States penal

system in terms of the number of citizens under the purview of the criminal justice system and the massive amounts of public and private financial resources devoted to building new facilities. In 1980 there were roughly 220 people incarcerated per every 100,000 Americans, and today that number has risen to 731 per every 100,000 bringing the total number of Americans under correctional supervision to more than 6 million (Gopnik 2012). This number exceeds the total number of people imprisoned in Stalin's gulag archipelago. In 2010 1 in every 137 Americans was in prison or jail (The Sentencing Project 2012). The rapid expansion of the United States carceral state reflects the shift from rehabilitation to retribution that emerged at roughly the same time that funding for social service programs decreased. The shift from rehabilitation to retribution was characterized by a change from the belief that the main purpose of incarceration and other penal policies was to change the attitudes and behaviors of offenders to reduce recidivism, correct anti-social behavior, and improve the welfare of offenders to the belief that the purpose of incarceration was to punish and dehumanize (Gottschalk 2006).

The retributive turn in criminal justice policy reflects a get tough and zero-tolerance stance on crime at all states of the criminal justice process. These policies have been described as a war on crime and are exemplified by a number of changes across the criminal justice system. Indeed, the period of the 1980s was witness to the proliberation of order-maintenance policing-- aggressively enforcing laws against public drunkenness, loitering, vandalism, littering, public urination, panhandling, prostitution, and other minor misdemeanors in attempt to prevent the escalation of criminal activity (Harcourt 1998). The war on drugs that began in the 1980s resulted in the rapid growth of drug offenders in prisons, stricter sentencing requirements as a growing number of states adopted

mandatory minimum requirements and three strikes laws (Gottschalk 2006). The retributive penal state is further illustrated by the increasing use of and support for the death penalty (Gopnik 2012) and increased willingness to incarcerate female and youth offenders (Chesney-Lind and Pasko 2012; Pasko 2008). Together, these joint processes of neoliberalization and criminalization have resulted in the unprecedented heavy-handed disciplining of desocialized labor and marginalized populations.

Neoliberalism, Criminalization, and the Production of Homelessness

It is these marginalized populations who have been abandoned by the state, the desocialized wage labor, who are then most commonly the targets of get tough crime policies and placed under the purview of the penal system (Wacquant 2009). Average lengths of sentences means that prisoners are away from their families and loved ones and barred from participating in society for longer periods of times, often in facilities that lack the resources and policy-mandate to provide adequate counseling and rehabilitation services (Chesney-Lind & Pasko 2004). Further, upon release, ex-offenders face immense barriers to reintegration. In 48 states and the District of Columbia, people convicted of a felony permanently or temporarily lose their right to vote (Alexander 2012). This means that 5.85 million or 1 in 40 adults have currently or permanently lost their right to vote (The Sentencing Project 2012). Further, federal and state statutes as well as discriminatory hiring practices make obtaining employment incredibly difficult in many cases; criminal convictions can prevent ex-offenders from moving into federally subsidized housing, participating in federally assisted housing programs, or even temporarily staying with

friends or family who live in subsidized housing; and are in many cases ineligible for TANF, SSI, and stamp (Alexander 2012).

This means that accessing already limited government assistance becomes even more difficult for ex-offenders, which significantly increases the likelihood that they will become homeless. A 2004 study conducted in New York state surveyed 48,424 newly released prisoners found that within two years of release 11.4% entered the shelter system and 32.8% were re-imprisoned (Metraux & Culhane 2004). Similarly, a 2008 study by the National Institute for Health (NIH) found that prisoners were 4-6 times more likely to be homeless than the general population (Greensburg & Rosenheck 2008). A 2005 study conducted in New York City found that 30-50 % of people on parole in the city were homeless, 18% of homeless people interviewed reported being previously locked-up in state of federal prison (Metraux et al 2007). Indeed, an anonymous homeless interviewee explained that she went to jail for two-weeks due to an unpaid parking ticket, and as a result lost her apartment and job, bounced around with friends and family for about eight months and eventually, went to a shelter because her support system had been exhausted and she was still unable to find employment (Anonymous homeless woman, Interview with author, January, 25, 2013). Research has further shown that the connection between homelessness and incarceration operates in the opposite direction as well, as homeless people are much more likely to face incarceration. Forty-nine percent of homeless people, regardless of criminal record prior to being homeless report having spent 5 or more days in county jail, and between 9-16% of people leaving jails were homeless prior to incarceration (Metraux et al 2007). These statistics indicate that the expansion of the

United States carceral state has contributed substantially to the growth of homeless populations.

Neoliberalism, Criminalization, and Responses to Homelessness

At the same time, the expansion of the penal apparatus is just as important for understanding the experiences and living conditions of individuals while they are homeless. As cities face rising rates of homelessness as a result of the current financial and housing crises, cities have increasingly responded to the problem of homelessness through punitive measures. Most commonly, homeless people are arrested for theft and property crimes (Officer Paul Denton, OSU Police Department, Interview with author, January 15, 2013) or for infractions associated with anti-homeless ordinances. Anti-homeless ordinances restrict access to, movement across, and actions within public space for homeless people and ultimately impeding upon this population's ability to survive (Mitchell 1997). These laws criminalize actions such as begging, camping, panhandling, eating, sleeping, or sitting in public spaces. Indeed, in 2011, of the 253 cities surveyed across the United States, 47% prohibit begging in particular public areas, 23% have citywide prohibitions on begging, 47% prohibit loitering in particular, 19% prohibit loitering citywide, and 30% prohibit lying down or sitting in certain public places (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and National Coalition for the Homeless 2012). Some cities have moved beyond the restriction of aggressive panhandling and limitations of time of day, proximity to ATMs and parking meters, and residential neighborhoods by enacting bans on all panhandling (*The New York Times*, October 5, 2012). Other cities have made food sharing in parks illegal, required panhandlers to secure a peddler's license

costing as much as $200 dollars, or have made it illegal for people to store personal belongings in public spaces (Mitchell 1997). The penalizations for these offenses range from one to thirty days in jail, fines of several hundred dollars, and banishment from urban areas, sometimes for as much as a one square mile radius (Beckett & Herbert 2009).

Part of a wider effort to purify public space, this trend entails the removal of the homeless and the poor from public view (Collins & Blomley 2003). By criminalizing actions necessary for survival and redefining acceptable uses of public space, anti-homeless ordinances seek to annihilate homeless people themselves by annihilating the spaces in which they must live (Mitchell 1997). Arguably, these ordinances criminalize the homeless not for posing a direct threat to other urban residents, but instead finds them guilty of having no privacy or property (*The Columbus Dispatch*, May 17, 2007). As Heather Maria Johnson of the National Law on Homelessness and Poverty wrote in *The New York Times*, "…cities are responding to the increasing number of chronically or visibly homeless people due to the economic crisis. Rather than addressing the issue of homelessness, they are adapting measures that move homeless people out of downtowns, tourist areas or even out of the city" (*Baltimore Brew*, January 29, 2013).

The enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances and other methods of broken-windows, public order policing work to discipline the poor and "solidify a dichotomy between 'honest people' and the 'disorderly' and between 'committed law-abiders and…disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, and the mentally disturbed" (Wilson & Kelling 1982, 34). One effect of these order maintenance policing is to produce those deemed disorderly as an object of surveillance to be watched, controlled, relocated, and ideally

excluded from neighborhoods (Harcourt 1998). In doing so, the division between the ordered and disordered, deserving and undeserving population constitutes the undesirable as a source of fear and effectively legitimizes punitive intervention and affirms the relationship between the power of culture and aesthetics of fear (Zukin 1995). The nexus between criminalization and homelessness exemplifies Wacquant's neoliberal government of social insecurity insofar as the marginalized and impoverished people abandoned by neoliberalism have been disproportionately targeted by the state's hard-handed, get tough mantra. These marginalized communities have been further disenfranchised through their enrollment into the carceral state and constructed as a disorderly population and as a threat to the neoliberal capitalist social order, thereby in need of further disciplining and surveillance by the carceral apparatus.

Beyond a Totalizing Account?

While the pervasiveness of neoliberal social policies and criminalization in shaping responses to homelessness by cities should not be overlooked, I do not wish to present these processes as monolithic, uncontested, or to suggest that the ambidextrous state is ever able to fully grasp its targeted population (Peck 2010). Indeed, many scholars have described strategies for resistance among homeless people that include from the re-designation of public space (Cloke et al 2008), calculated attempts to challenge or avoid the purview of law enforcement (Casey et al 2008), strategies for negotiation with sympathetic officers for access to public spaces and resources (Wardaugh 1999), and conscious acts of self definition that counter constructions as criminal other and challenge neoliberal disciplinary techniques (Sparks 2012).

In addition, in response to the tireless work of local-level legal advocates for the homeless and national reports by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and National Coalition to End Homelessness, several cities in the United States have begun to implement strategies that decriminalize homelessness by moving beyond the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances towards more service and solution-based alternatives. In a 2012 report, *Searching Out Solutions: Constructive Alternatives to the Criminalization of Homelessness* (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 2012, page 2), stated that:

> Individuals experiencing homelessness should be afforded the same dignity, compassion, and support provided to others. Criminalization policies further marginalize men and women who are experiencing homelessness, fuel inflammatory attitudes, and may even unduly restrict constitutionally protected liberties. Moreover, there is ample evidence that alternatives to criminalization policies can adequately balance the needs of all parties. Community residents, government agencies, businesses, and men and women who are experiencing homelessness are better served by solutions that do not marginalize people experiencing homelessness, but rather strike at the core factors contributing to homelessness.

The report further explained that arresting homeless people leaves them with a criminal record and creates additional barriers to obtaining work and housing and explains that the criminalization of homeless people is a temporary and unsustainable intervention.

The report recommends three policies that exemplify constructive alternatives to homelessness that result in cost-savings, and have a lasting positive impact on the quality of life for individuals experiencing homelessness and the larger community. The first of these polices is the creation of comprehensive and seamless systems of care. This strategy involves the development of community wide plans to end homelessness that involve consumers, businesses, law enforcement, mayors and other city/town officials, schools,

philanthropy, and community members as well as the expansion of housing-first programs, permanent supportive housing, 24 hour access to shelters, the development of community outreach teams, coordinated and standardized food sharing and improved access to mainstream benefit programs. The second policy directive involves collaboration between law enforcement and behavioral health and social service providers. This strategy includes outreach and engagement involving police and service provider collaboration to link people with supportive housing and avoid arrest, cross-training officers and service providers to facilitate information sharing and promote coordination, and the establishment of crisis intervention teams with specially trained police officers working with behavioral health professionals to respond to crises involving people with mental health issues. The third policy directive entails the implementation of alternative justice system strategies to reduce homeless involvement with the criminal justice system, decrease recidivism, and facilitate connection with other systems of care. Examples of this strategy include problem solving courts that focus on the underlying causes of illegal activities, citation dismissal programs that substitute community service for payment of fines, and the establishment of holistic public defender officers that provide social services in addition to standard legal services.

Columbus, OH represents a city that has prided itself and been nationally recognized for its efforts to develop and adopt constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness. Although the city does not currently have alternative justice programs, the city has received numerous accolades for its comprehensive care and collaboration between law enforcement and service providers. Drawing together considerations from literature on variegated neoliberalism, legal geographies and a poverty management

approach to homelessness my interest throughout this research is to interrogate the politics of "actually existing" anti-homelessness and the (de)criminalization of homelessness. By variegated neoliberalism I mean that the neoliberalism is best understood as a process rather than an event and is shaped by non-linear and incoherent policy interests, and adapted to fit and contested within context-specific circumstances (Brenner et al 2010; Leitner et al 2006). This means that although neoliberal logic underscores policy making, its manifestations vary across and within cities and are in a constant state of negotiation and contestation.

Similarly, the law—as the mediator of the carceral state—exists not as a monolith but rather as an uneven constellation of practices transformed and mediated by social, political, and spatial processes and only gains meaning through embodied practices by individual officers (Blomley 2011). This means that the macro-level carceral state is constituted and reproduced by legal and non-legal actors through everyday practices. Finally, poverty management refers to the spatial and temporal structures beyond the enactment of anti-homeless ordinances that intends to reduce homeless visibility and promotes the re-institutionalization and circulation of these populations (DeVerteuil et al 2009, 652). Poverty management considers not only how the state has sought to contain and control the homeless but also how the state has attempted to care for these populations through techniques that include the expansion of affordable housing, the shifting of responsibility from the state to the third sector, and the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances (DeVerteuil et al 2009, 652). The interplay of poverty management actors contributes to the complexification rather than the collapse of the homeless

landscape (DeVerteuil et al 2009; for additional literature on the collapse of public space see Mitchell 1997; Staeheli & Mitchell 2008).

By viewing the (de)criminalization of homelessness from this vantage point, my goal is to demonstrate how and the extent to which neoliberal logics are reproduced through embodied practices even as the city seeks to move towards more passionate and decriminalized responses to homelessness. In order to understand how the neoliberal government of social insecurity has played across different socio-spatial contexts research must focus on the street-level micro-practices of regulatory enforcement—attention to the discursive and micro-practical production of truth and authority in government shaped by both formal and informal notions of public good and order (Proudfoot & McCann 2008). Further, the evaluation of anti-homelessness and criminalization cannot be limited to the enforcement of laws and ordinances, and must consider how changing roles and disciplinary strategies have evolved, extended beyond, and yet are indebted to the penal apparatus.

V. Contextualizing Columbus

> *Everyone realizes you have to take care of your fellow man in some kind of way. The question is, how are you taking care of him and you know if we're not meeting, if we're inadequate, if there are inadequacies somewhere, let's figure out how we get it accomplished* (Erica Jones, Columbus City Council, interview with author, January 17, 2013).

> *But you know what we know about Columbus? Good is not good enough. We have to do better. And we are on the track to really do that. And the great thing is, we have our city and county folks that are deeply involved, and our corporate community is actually paying for the change process. They are paying for the research. They are paying for the facilitation – they think it's so important. That's what's so different about this community. The National Alliance to End Homelessness guy was in and he said "If it [policy change] can't be done in Columbus, Ohio, I don't know what I'm going*

> *to tell the rest of the country, because if it can't be done here – it can't be done*" (Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, interview with author, January 17, 2013).

Like most cities across the United States, Columbus, OH, has seen a marked increase in the number of people seeking homeless services. According to the 2012 Annual Report released by the Community Shelter Board, from October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012, 9,163 individuals and children were served in emergency shelters in Columbus and Franklin County, a 13 percent increase compared to the previous year. The number of single adults in emergency shelter increased by 9 percent to 5,405 and the number of families increased by 27 percent, to 1,215. Over a two-year period, the increase in family homelessness is a staggering 52 percent. Among sheltered homeless individuals, the percentage of young adults (age 18 to 30) has increased from 21 percent (2010) to 25 percent (2011) to 26 percent (2012), and the percentage of individuals who were over 51 has decreased from 26 to 24 percent in 2012. While more than 60 percent of adults in families in emergency shelter were under the age of 30, nationwide only 22 percent of homeless adults in families were in this age category. Columbus has a significantly younger homeless population in families than nationwide. Nationwide 44 percent of the sheltered individuals in families are African American; the Columbus distribution shows overrepresentation of African Americans in the homeless population, at 66 percent. African-Americans comprise only 27.6 % of the city's overall population (2010 U.S. Census). The typical profile for a homeless family is a twenty-eight year old black woman with 2-3 children (Adrienne Corbett, Homeless Families Foundation, Interview with author, January 15, 2013). The city's homeless population has increasingly come to include Hispanic immigrants, Somali and other East-African Immigrants, and people who have

moved to Columbus from nearby Appalachian communities (Adrienne Corbett, Homeless Families Foundation, Interview with author, January 15, 2013). Finally, 8% of single adults in the city entered emergency shelter from an institution—hospital, jail, prison, or treatment facility (Annual Homeless Assessment Report 2012).

Unlike many other cities across the United States, the city of Columbus's strategy for responding to the growing homeless population has diverged from the national trend of criminalization. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2010), the city is at the forefront for constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness. Speaking to this, two interviewees explained that:

> I haven't seen anything in Columbus that is as restrictive as some other cities. We aren't like Cincinnati or Pittsburgh where you can't even give a blanket or food to somebody in a public park. Columbus would not come up with anything like that (Molly Hennessey, Columbus Legal Aid Society, interview with author, January 17, 2013).

> I worked for a few years with homelessness in Dayton, OH, and the officers there used to cite homeless people with jaywalking offenses as they moved their things from the day center to the over night shelter. Sometimes they would go to jail because they could not pay, but it was away to move them out of downtown. In Cleveland, and I don't know if this is still the case, but the city rounds up homeless people and drops them off in the suburbs before big sporting events so they can't panhandle. They make sure they are far enough away from downtown that they won't be able to get back until after the event. I have never heard of Columbus doing anything as extreme as that (Melissa Will, Southeastern Ohio Legal Services, interview with author, January 23, 2013).

> A lot of officers are probably passionate about the homeless problem, and I think they, like most of the public, question what good it is going to do to write this guy a ticket when all that is going to happen to him is he is going to spend a night in jail when he really needs help. He does not have the money to pay, so why even do it? And I would say that is most of the officers. That is the kind of tact that they take. When they see them, they will say, hey, listen. It is illegal to solicit from the roadway; you are going to have to move on down the road. You cannot stay here. And they do, they move. (Lt. Brust, Columbus Division of Police, interview with author, January 29, 2013).

> We don't go for filling the jails with people who just happen to sit here and catch their breath during the day. Our goal is not to fill our jail cells. Our goal is to get

> people housed. And honestly, the more times we arrest that individual the harder we are making it to house that individual (Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, interview with author, January 17, 2013).

Several examples of Columbus' national recognition for the treatment of the homeless population appear on the Community Shelter Board's website (www.csb.org, last accessed March 21, 2013). Example accolades include:

> Nan Roman, head of the National Alliance to End Homelessness was quoted in *The Columbus Dispatch* in February 2010, saying Columbus responds well to the problem of homelessness. The area has "one of the best, if not the best, homeless systems in the country."
> During a national conference in Washington, DC in July 2010, U.S. Department of HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan repeatedly referred to Columbus' homeless system as a national leader.
>
> The October 2009 issue of Ebony Magazine highlights stories of hope overcoming homelessness in Washington DC, Columbus, and Sacramento. The article features family served by Community Housing Network and YWCA Columbus and shares the promise of more good news to come as a result of the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program stimulus funds.

Collaboration, Compassion, Consolidation

Overwhelmingly, policy-makers, law enforcement officials, and advocates expressed that the city of Columbus boasts a strong commitment to collaboration and compassion that makes it uniquely capable of tackling the issue of homelessness. In Columbus, the entire community can come together to end homelessness by working as a system as opposed to a fragmented set of resources being able to address the problem in a much more efficient and effective manner (Franklin County Commissioner, quotation taken from Community Shelter Board website, www.csb.org, last accessed March 21, 2013). As councilwoman Erica Jones further explained,

> It [the city's success] underscores being in partnership with the community, staying in dialogue, having an open door answering the questions, walking that walk together – community – lawmaker - agency – together we have elected officials who

> absolutely get it. Every member of City Council and the Mayor, and our County Commissioner's as well, are absolutely one – they know about the issue, they care about the issue and they are absolutely committed. I don't have to tell the two-part story and the two-part story is – I don't have to talk to our elected officials about why this is important or that we have an issue. They just want me to tell them "What are we going to do about it?" And since I don't have to tell the first part, we can spend all our time talking about what are we going to do about it. Mayor Coleman has always been an advocate for housing for everyone, not just the wealthiest, not just middle class or families but everyone – including formally homeless individuals or individuals that are currently homeless that need a permanent place to live (Erica Jones, Columbus City Council, interview with author, January 17, 2013).

A second component of the city's success can be explained by the centralized oversight of Columbus' homeless assistance system, which is funded, managed, and evaluated by the community's lead Continuum of Care (CoC) agency, the Community Shelter Board (CSB). CSB operates an outcomes-based funding model that uses measurable performance standards to monitor and evaluate agencies' and system progress toward community goals. The performance standards reinforce an overall vision and strategy for improving the homeless services system and working toward the eventual elimination of homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness 2010). The organization oversees over $13 million in funding for homelessness prevention initiatives, emergency shelters, housing services, and supportive housing — showcasing an innovative, collaborative model for abolishing homelessness and works collaboratively with 12 partner agencies to unify resources and knowledge, helping over 8,000 people each year. The Community Shelter Board oversees a broad based community plan called Rebuilding Lives which emphasizes: access—people at imminent risk of homelessness are linked to community resources, crisis response—people experiencing homelessness receive assistance to address their immediate housing crisis, transition—people experiencing homelessness transition from

crisis to stability, and advocacy—resources and public policy support solutions to end homelessness. As Michelle Heritage, Director of the Community Shelter Board explained:

> We're attacking the issue a different way. When our outreach teams go out, or when you come in the shelter, our end goal is to get you stably housed. It's not to, hold you, string you along and do the care and the feeding. It is to empower you to get to rebuild lives. So our whole approach is different (Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, Interview with author, January 17, 2013).

Although many of the Columbus advocates and officials that I interviewed voiced support for consolidation under the Community Shelter Board as markedly different and more progressive compared to other cities, it is important to note that not all members of the governing apparatus shared these sentiments. As one letter to the editor writer explained:

> While The Shelter Board receives accolades from groups outside Columbus who see their housing successes, there remains a very serious lack of beds for homeless men and women. One night recently, there were 67 women on the waiting list for a bed in one of the two women's shelters. Women can call the point-of-entry line daily for weeks and still not get a bed. It is well-known and documented among those who work with the homeless that additional beds have not been provided for more than 10 years, in which time the number of homeless women and men has increased dramatically. When the Columbus Shelter Board closed The Open Shelter, they eliminated 100 beds for men, many of them the most difficult to house because of mental and substance abuse issues (*The Columbus Dispatch*, August 11, 2012).

Further, a second interviewee explained that the provision of services for the homeless has become much more of a political game as a result of all of the grant money being available. As one interviewee explained:

> There seemed to be two groups, one group that emphasizes immediate care for people. For example, if it is January and below freezing tonight, we need to get these people shelter because they will die. Then there is the other group that says we don't want to waste our limited resources on people who are not going to become self-sufficient. So, if you don't demonstrate to us that you are worthy of shelter then good luck to you (Anonymous homeless advocate, interview with author, January 17 2013).

Even as some service providers identified issues of contention that complicate the tidy the city's tidy collaborative identity, the nature of collaboration and compassion are central to understanding how Columbus distinguishes its policies and practices from other cities.

Partnership Between Law and Service

In addition to a heightened commitment to collaboration and compassion, the changing relationship between law enforcement and service providers further contributes to the city's constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness. The changes in policing practices across Columbus can be explained by the introduction of community ambassadors in the business improvement districts and the development of partnerships between police and service providers.

The city's commitment to collaborative initiatives has resulted in the shifting of some responsibilities from the Columbus Division of Police to community ambassadors within the city's Business Improvement Districts and university police departments and the expansion of resources available for officers and the homeless. One aspect of this transformation is the partnership between the Columbus Police Department and the Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District which has undertaken several projects to restore urban order to attract investors, prospective business owners, and middle to upper-class residents to live, work, and play downtown.

Efforts to improve cleanliness range from pet waste removal, recycling projects, and adding flower boxes to cracking down on public defecation (Capital Crossroads Annual Report 2011). Safety measures include the strict enforcement of misdemeanor laws and disbursement of loiterers along with increased surveillance through the patrolling of

Columbus Commons (a downtown park); training for downtown employees on how to prevent thievery; executing consent agreements with two stores that sell alcohol to prohibit the sale of certain products, which are problematic for the community; and, providing safety escorts and developing an online security network between Columbus City Police, the Capital Crossroads Special Duty Police Officers, and private security providers through which downtown employees, residents, and property owners can report suspicious behaviors (*The Columbus Dispatch* May 24, 2011; *The Columbus Dispatch* September 10, 2011; Capital Crossroads Annual Report 2011). The ambassadors provided a combined 19,000 hours of supplemental safety services, addressed more than 500 panhandling complaints, provided 1,100 safety escorts in 2011, and issued an average of 11 tickets and 25 arrests each month (Capital Crossroads Annual Report 2011; *The Columbus Dispatch* May 12, 2008). According to a Capital Crossroads report, these combined efforts have resulted in a 36% decrease in crime in the downtown area since 2002 (*The Columbus Dispatch* March 9, 2009).

The presence of safety ambassadors frees up Columbus Police Officers to address more serious offenses (Lt. Brust, Columbus Division of Police, Interview with author, January 29, 2013). At the same time, safety ambassadors often have close relationships with shelters, drop-in centers, and other homeless resource sites to which they can direct the homeless. The primary role of safety ambassadors is to keep the homeless moving along, which depending upon circumstances means helping them to services, moving them off of private property in response to business owner complaints, or moving them out of the downtown area as a whole, in many cases to neighborhoods such as Clintonville and German Village (Sue Villilo, Faith Missions, Interview with author, February 7, 2013). In

addition both the officers and ambassadors express a commitment to educating the homeless which centers around getting access to resources rather than punishment,

> If a person feels violated in any way, which usually they will call an ambassador, like a neighborhood ambassador, which is kind of like a neighborhood watch person or in some cases they call the police. But we've done a really good job at having a relationship with providers and outreach with Columbus Police at it relates to homeless individuals. They don't just go out and say "I'm going to bust this guy because he's homeless and he just violated your rights as you.. as he was asking for a quarter when you were putting money in the meter." They work with folks, they take every opportunity to educate and say "Hey I don't know if you know this." or "Are you new in town? Because in Columbus here's how we do things." You know what I mean? They will give them a warning, they'll kind of do an education and say "Hey do you need a ride somewhere?" (Erica Jones, Columbus City Council, Interview with author, January 17, 2013)

The exchange of information between Columbus police officers, security ambassadors, and university police departments has been crucial to Columbus's approach. Indeed, one interviewee emphasized that:

> It is not so much that they [police] patrol but it was how they patrolled. And it was this example that we're talking about, Columbus State was involved as well as CCAD, Columbus College of Art and Design. They also have security teams, it was them talking together, talking to one another – communicating better (Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, Interview with author, January 17, 2013).

Further, the changing role of law enforcement in responding to homelessness in Columbus has been impacted by the expansion of services across the city, specifically Maryhaven Engagement Center—a center for publicly inebriated homeless men and women that offers opportunities to make changes and rebuild lives—and Netcare—a 24 hour mental health and substance intervention, stabilization, and assessment center. Beginning in 2003, officers underwent Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), a collaborative educational program between National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), mental health providers and local universities to train law enforcement officers to handle incidents

involving mentally ill people. Volunteer patrol officers receive 40 hours of training in mental illness and the local mental health system. This training allowed law enforcement officers to better respond to the needs of citizens, including the homeless, who suffer from mental illness or substance dependence and enabled officers to connect these people with necessary services and treatment options rather than simply directing them to jails.

The establishment of Maryhaven and Netcare also changed the relationship of law enforcement officers to service providers by allowing more efficient, effective, and inexpensive alternatives to incarcerating homeless people for offenses such as public intoxication, public indecency, and disturbance of the peace. From my ride-along with a Columbus police officer (Anonymous police officer, author's fieldnotes from ride-along, February 15, 2013), I learned that Maryhaven has a transportation service that runs until approximately 10pm every night that transports visibly intoxicated people or people who express interest in getting treatment to the center, which is located on the city's south east side. After 10 pm, if officers see publicly inebriated homeless people or mentally unstable homeless people who may pose a threat to themselves or others, then the officers will transport them to Maryhaven or Netcare, pending appropriate circumstances. In other cases, staff members at shelters to escort homeless people to Maryhaven will call officers. Most shelters have strict rules that in order to be eligible for a bed, homeless people must abide by a curfew, cannot bring drugs and alcohol into the shelter, and cannot be too inebriated to function. If any of these conditions are breached, the staff may call the police to escort the person to Maryhaven, or the homeless person may request that the staff arrange transport. As the director of Maryhaven explained to me:

> Before we opened the Engagement Center, if a police officer working third shift got a call that someone was stumbling on the sidewalk at Broad and High, they would

> have tried to take them to the shelter. If the shelter was closed, full, or unwilling to take the person because they were too inebriated but not inebriated enough to go to a psychiatric facility, the officer would have not choice but to take the person to jail. He might say, "You know this guy made some threats so probably better keep him" and that's very expensive, very expensive. So it is -- it's a low cost alternative, it's a caring and humane alternative to what a lot of other cities have to do with homeless populations who tend to be either mentally ill or have addictive illness (Paul Coleman, Maryhaven Engagement Center, Interview with author, January 30, 2013).

The relationships between Columbus Police Department and Netcare was similarly characterized by my interview with a Police Lieutenant:

> Netcare is an organization that we can take people to that we think are suffering from mental illness. If we come into contact with somebody who is homeless and they agree to go to Netcare on their own or if we think they are a threat to themselves or others, then that is where the officers take them. If none of those occur, then really the only other option we have other than Maryhaven is to take them to one of the missions. The Faith Mission down on Long Street, the YMCA is a type of mission, so we will take them there and drop them off. The problem with that is, a lot of the times, they are not going to let somebody in that is drunk or has been drinking. You have to go there sober, and for a lot of these people, they are hardly ever sober (Lt. Brust, Columbus Division of Police, Interview with author, January 29, 2013).

These institutions present a cheaper alternative and a more compassionate solution that aligns with the city's goal of rebuilding lives. According to an independent cost benefit study made possible by a grant from The Columbus Foundation, for every dollar invested in adult treatment at Maryhaven, the community saves eleven dollars in just healthcare and justice system costs (www.maryhaven.com). Homeless advocates and city officials from Los Angeles, New York City, Seattle, and the states of Utah, Michigan, and Massachusetts have all visited Columbus within the past year to see how the engagement center operates and how they might incorporate similar institutions in their own respective regions (Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, Interview with author, January 17, 2013).

In the previous sections I have demonstrated the increasing complexity of responses to homelessness and suggested that even as policies in Columbus, OH. In the following sections I will discuss two specific instances of how these complex and contradictory efforts in fact work against efforts to decriminalize homelessness. In doing so, I return to the logics of neoliberalism and carceralization in order to understand how the possibilities for care for the homeless are shaped on the ground. I draw upon two examples: (1) the relationship between pathology, self-care, and commercialism evinced in discourses of change and (2) the conflation homelessness and threat of sexual offense.

"I am a salesman and the product I am selling is change.[1]"

The development of the Maryhaven engagement center has been instrumental to shaping and informing Columbus's non-criminal responses to homelessness. The Engagement Center is designed to provide a refuge for publically inebriated homeless men and women and to offer them opportunities to begin making changes to rebuild their lives. The center shelters 50 men and 8 women per night and offers 24 hour medical care 365 days per week. Individuals must meet the following criteria for admission: male or female, 18 years of age or older, transported by Reach Out Workers of Safety Officers, permanently or temporarily without a home, publicly under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Maryhaven was founded in 1953 at the request of the then Roman Catholic Bishop of Columbus, Michael J. Ready as a halfway house for women alcoholics. The Bishop asked the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, a religious order at the time, if they would extend their ministry to troubled girls who suffered from alcoholism. The organization grew modestly

[1] Paul Coleman, Maryhaven Engagement Center, January 30, 2013
[2] Anonymous Police Officer, Author's field notes from ride-along, February 15, 2013

through the 1950s and 1960s, and in 1976, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd were no longer able to staff Maryhaven and turned the organization over to a non-profit board of trustees, which is the entity that currently oversees Maryhaven.

The Maryhaven CEO explained to me that: "100% of the [homeless] population has a problem with addictive illness and probably 85% to 90% of the population also has a co-occurring disorder in terms of a mental health issue. These are folks who are living on the streets and in many cases want to live on the streets, which makes engaging this population an especially difficult task" (Paul Coleman, Maryhaven Engagement Center, Interview with author, January 30, 2013). Consistent with the city's overall narrative of compassion, the role of the Engagement Center is to take publicly inebriated homeless people off of the streets, bring them to a safe, warm, and caring place to take care of their basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter, and engage them in treatment or refer them to the main hospital. In my interview with the organization's CEO explained to me that when the center refers to people who have been taken off the streets by the outreach team or law enforcement officers as customers rather than patients because they have not agreed to be treated. He went on to explain that:

> We start at what is called in the business the pre-contemplation stage, in other words "Something may be wrong in my life, I'm not sure but I'm not even sure it's wrong, but I'm thinking about it". That's the engagement center for publically inebriated homeless men and women. And that particular center takes customers, and we call them customers -- they're not patients because they haven't agreed to be treated. Takes customers literally off the street who are publically inebriated and homeless and attempts to, as the name Engagement Center and Mary Haven applies, engage them in treatment and refer them over here to the main hospital (Paul Coleman, Maryhaven Engagement Center, Interview with author, January 30, 2013).

The Engagement Center emphasizes a commitment to patient care as central to facilitating both the transition from customer to patient and ultimately to rebuilding stable and sober

livelihoods. Patient care is emphasized for all staff, ranging from social workers to cafeteria personnel, and centers around respecting the patient, even if he or she is in a different place than the worker thinks that he or she should be. Beyond respect, a second aspect of patient care is the emphasis on commitment, illustrated through the organization's strategy of aggressive case management. Aggressive case management involves a single case manager who helps patients navigate the healthcare system, arranges transportation, and coordinates appointments. Even though these may seem to be relatively simple tasks, given the lack of stable housing or billable address compounded with the challenges of mental health disease and addiction, the careful oversight of these managers in central to successful rehabilitation.

In addition to being publically inebriated and homeless, the third criterion for admission to Maryhaven is the person's willingness to accept change of the mind, body, and soul. The emphasis on patient care and close oversight cannot invoke the initial commitment to change but can facilitate the transformation. In part, the organization's success is due to the close relationships and trust developed through the individualized case management.

> People generally do not change because they are told to change, they change because they see others who have changed and who are leading happier and more successful lives. So I think the one to one relationship is very important, our turnover rate here at Maryhaven is relatively low given industry standards. Industry standards in behavioral health have turnovers as high as 35% to 40%, our generally are in the low 20s, that is good. That means that people particularly over in our engagement center for homeless publically inebriated men and women, the person coming back is seeing the same face and that face is saying well Paul, how is it going now? It is hard out there. Why do we not try and do something about it and why do we not get you over and get you detoxed. Well I do not know. And that does not happen often on the first encounter but when you build a relationship of trust, it is easier to have it happen (Paul Coleman, Maryhaven Engagement Center, Interview with author, January 30, 2013).

When asked his perspectives on how change is initiated, Mr. Coleman explained that "The only human being who truly welcomes change is a baby with a wet diaper" and most

people are resistant or in denial. Usually the threat of losing children, a dire trauma, or the threat of death was necessary before customers would become patients:

> You know people think about behavioral health, alcohol and drug addiction and mental illness as being different from acute illnesses like diabetes or heart disease; they're not, please understand that. Understand that you have to change your behavior no matter whether you have a behavioral illness or an acute illness. If you have problems with your cardiovascular system and you are very fond of eating fatty foods, smoking cigarettes and not exercising; you must change or you will die. If you are an alcoholic you must stop drinking or you will die. So both of those diseases are diseases of organs of the body with behavioral manifestations (Paul Coleman, Maryhaven Engagement Center, Interview with author, January 30, 2013).

Even though the organization does not proselytize and patients are not required to participate in religious activities, the transformative potential of religion in overcoming addiction is another component of the organization's response to mental illness and addiction. The path to overcoming addiction and mental health issues was likened to the biblical exodus from slavery.

> The Exodus is a journey from slavery into freedom. Now for a person who is suffering from addictive illness and seeks to get better, what are they seeking? I said I am not a theologian but they are seeking release from the slavery of addictive illness to the freedom of being alcohol and drug free, the great Jack Lemmon portrayal in *the Days of Wine and Roses*, of the alcoholic who is scratching in the dirt trying to remember where he buried the bottle that is slavery. And so to someone who understands the story of the Exodus in the Jewish tradition and of course, in the Christian tradition yes, that can be very meaningful. In the African American tradition, one of the reasons that the Christian religion was so powerful among enslaved people brought over here was that it was a journey and if you are familiar with the Canon of Spirituals, a lot of religion in that. Go down Moses, set my people free, do that was a message. If you look at the person who you can probably guess this by the picture on the wall, the person who I think is primarily responsible for further steps along the liberation of African Americans, Dr. Martin Luther King, he was no lawyer, he was no physician, and he was a minister. So I think those kinds of traditions can be very powerful in terms of helping people with addictive and mental illness (Paul Coleman, Maryhaven Engagement Center, Interview with author, January 30, 2013).

The pervasiveness of business terminologies such as consumer and industry and emphasis on cost efficiency demonstrate the neoliberal conflation of project validity and abidance by market principles. The notion of publicly inebriated homeless people as customers, implying the existence of a rational-economic actor invoking a right to choice and signifying the commodification of basic rights and services, is especially problematic and misleading given that individuals are most commonly escorted by police officers and in most cases the only alternative is to go to jail. On one hand, this language masks the coercive and ideological violence inherent in the construction of legal rules (Lopez 2005). Even as officers opt to take publicly inebriated homeless people to Maryhaven rather than jail, officers inflict violence upon homeless bodies as they demarcate socio-spatial belonging and insofar as there is always the looming possibility of a hard-handing legal response. Indeed, even as the partnership between Maryhaven Engagement Center and the Columbus Police Department represents a blurring the left and right hands of the state, the state may opt to rescind its so-called compassion. Should the state opt to act as such, the individual consumer has no control or agency. Insofar as the publicly inebriated homeless person is always left up to the whimsical micro-practices of police discretion (Herbert 1996a), there can be no agential consumer.

The limits to care and compassion are further constituted by notions of empowerment that focus on normalization and correcting individual flaws instead of addressing wider structural ills. The language of individual change, self-transformation, and responsibilization that appears apparent in the Maryhaven mission and approach to care reinforces the notion that homelessness, mental illness, and addiction are the result of personal failing. In other words, people are homeless as a result of their addictions, mental

illness, or due to their own free will, and similarly they are also able to overcome these conditions through their own free will and initiative as well. The pathologization of homelessness could not be made more explicit than within the comment that 100% of homeless people have mental illness or addiction, implying that the entire homeless population is degenerate, incompetent, and incapable of self-government due to personal deficiencies alone. This logic lets the state off the hook for its failure to provide adequate mental health services, health care, housing, and economic opportunities and instead focuses on the undisciplined, irrational homeless individual who lacks capacity for self-governance. Further, these assumptions, couched in the modern language of pathology, treatment and rehabilitation and combined with the spatial management of homeless bodies continue to frame the homeless as a disordered social *other*—the antithesis of liberal rationality who is incapable of self-governance (Sparks 2012). By extension, the neoliberal homeless body is produced as an object in need of discipline.

"We can't just let Joe Schmo homeless sex offender roam around the city.[2]"

Throughout the months of November and December 2012, *The Columbus Dispatch* ran roughly a dozen stories about the controversy surrounding the siting of the city's winter overflow homeless shelter. Among the issues raised in the slew of news articles and editorials were the points that, this is the first time that an overflow shelter had been sited outside of the city limits, that the site was initially going to be used as church and that the Community Shelter Board had changed its plans at the last minute, and that locating a homeless shelter in this particular area would pose a threat to the community, because the

[2] Anonymous Police Officer, Author's field notes from ride-along, February 15, 2013

shelter is in such close proximity to a daycare center (see for example *The Columbus Dispatch* November 30, 2012; *The Columbus Dispatch* November 28, 2012). It is the third claim that I will make the object of my analysis.

The contention surrounding the close proximity between with winter overflow shelter and an area daycare center rests upon the logic that the homeless pose a threat to neighborhood children. As the *Dispatch* articles state, "parents leave their children here with the utmost expectation that we will keep those kids safe and create a nurturing environment…the presence of the shelter will put the children in danger and harm the daycare center's business" (*The Columbus Dispatch* November 30, 2012). When asked about this controversy, Michelle Heritage, Director of the Community Shelter Board, explained to me that she had been spending much of her time and energy trying to get the message across that "not all homeless people are pedophiles" (Michelle Heritage, Community Shelter Board, Interview with author, January 17, 2013). She went on to tell me that currently, three shelters across the city are within one block of a daycare center or even in the same complex, and that the proportion of complaints has not exceeded the rate across the entire city. She attributed the recent panic around the winter over-flow shelter to the lack of education, and explained that through "community preparation"—community meetings and information sessions to voice neighborhood concerns and debunk myths about the homeless, areas would eventually be able to come to a common ground for how to best accommodate the interests of all involved parties.

In this particular case, the common ground decision resulted in the overflow shelter being sited in the proposed area, but with precautions to ensure that the homeless would never come into contact with the daycare children. From my interview and ride-along with

Columbus Police Officers, I learned that homeless patrons of the shelter must be transported at 4:30am every morning to the main public bus hub, nearly six miles away. The logic behind this decision is that the homeless people will be gone before the children are dropped off and will not be able to return until after all of the children have gone home for the day. By arranging the transport of the homeless, the city has mitigated the threat of "unpredictable and unaccounted for sexual predator" (Anonymous Police Officer, Author's field notes from ride-along, February 15, 2013).

Ironically, the decision to relocate the homeless downtown presents an additional point of contention as evidenced by discussion during my ride along with a Columbus Police Officer. The officer explained that some of the shelters across the city were spending as much as $52,000 annually to issue free bus passes to the homeless. The officer expressed her dissatisfaction with this decision explaining that by providing transportation for the homeless, the city was directly and indirectly enabling sex offenders to harm other citizens:

> What we have is a bunch of homeless people riding the bus all over the city and into who knows what neighborhood. It is especially problematic because many of them are sex-offenders. You can't just have Joe Schmo homeless sex offender roaming the city to hurt the woman or child he wants. If he wants to take his $3 panhandling money and buy a bus pass for the day instead of a 40 that is fine. All I am saying is that if the city pays then they should be liable if a kid gets hurt, because they enabled it (Anonymous Police Officer, Author's field notes from ride-along, February 15, 2013).

The conflation of homeless and sex offenders represents an example of an instance in which officers and the community members criminalize and construct the homeless as the non-citizen other, even as the city's mantra purports decriminalization. In both cases, the homeless are constituted through the lens of "atavistic sexual predator"—degenerate, hypersexual, irrational, lacking moral inhibition, and always posing a threat to the health of

the population (McWhorter 2009). The atavistic sexual predator, like the roaming homeless sex offender, is a source of moral and social panic and speaks both to the pathologization of homelessness and exemplifies the transition from rehabilitation to retribution within the United States (Wacquant 2009).

In the case of the 'atavistic sexual predator'/homeless individual, it is apparent that the terms of mobility have not been left up to the individual to decide and rather are shaped and constituted by state initiatives to maintain order and protect the deserving public, because the individual, if left up to his own irrational and pathological devices will inevitably pose a threat to public good. Similar to people-based zoning and trespass ordinances (Beckett and Herbert 2009), the concerted efforts to control the mobility of the homeless through arranging transportation away from daycare centers, discouraging the homeless from taking the bus (or at the very least discouraging the city and service providers from facilitating bus transport), and the "taxi-ing" of the homeless to services such as Maryhaven and Netcare, can be understood as "attempts to remove people from certain public locations on the basis of sovereign pre-knowledge of the status of a person as previous miscreant, regardless of actual empirical evidence of offense (Mitchell 2009). Yet even as the city attempts to mitigate risk through the initial production of spatial fix—the decision to move the homeless away from the daycare center—they are faced with the need to produce another—shaped by the perceived need to limit accessibility to public transportation, which suggests that there is no place where the homeless can be without posing a threat to wider society (Cresswell 1996).

To be sure, the conflation of homelessness with sex offender is not a belief that is held by all actors and certainly there are other attitudes within the governance apparatus.

Further, it is true that as a result of the transportation compromise around the winter overflow shelter, nearly 100 human beings that otherwise would have been sleeping outside during the harsh winter months in the Midwest, but the question must be posed: at what long term cost and on what terms can common ground be built upon? In other words, by accepting the request to relocate homeless people prior to the arrival of daycare children, are service providers legitimating and reproducing the assumption that the homeless population is dangerous and poses a greater threat to children than the housed population?

I argue that today's homeless are caught in a double-bind wherein they must choose between pathologization and criminalization as a condition of basic survival, and in effect, this trap marks the inevitable meeting point between rehabilitative and punitive approaches to homeless management (Sparks 2012, page 1517). While the latter aims at physical exclusion of bodies from public space, the former marks the exclusion of the homeless from full citizenship and the public sphere (Sparks 2012, page 1518). The bracketing of recognition and attempts at social inclusion—illustrated by the attempt to carve out a publically supported space for the homeless (the winter overflow shelter)—are contingent upon the acknowledgement that the homeless are a threat to safety and humanity. I argue that even as the city looks towards non-punitive responses to homelessness, notions of worthiness are constitutively bound to and cannot be decoupled from the logics of individualization, responsibilization, and pathologization consistent with the neoliberal carceral state.

VI. America's Nicest City?

In the previous pages, I have interrogated the constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness undertaken by the city of Columbus demonstrated the role of the neoliberal carceral state in both producing and responding to homelessness. Indeed, the city of Columbus' response to homelessness does not resemble the punitive annihilation of people by space through the aggressive enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances described by Mitchell (1997). Nor is the Columbus approach emblematic of the excessive deployment of the penal apparatus characterized by Wacquant (2009). The language of care and compassion and commitment towards inclusion, shelter, and solutions indicates that a purely punitive, revanchist (Smith 1996) response is not at work in the Columbus context. On the surface, the policy directive towards constructive alternatives to criminalization signals a possible return to rehabilitation rather than retribution and a shifting of legitimacy from the state's right hand to the left. Further, the qualities of policing in Columbus could also be viewed as a scaling back of broken-windows policing. However, when digging deeper, we see that this is not the case. The findings of my research suggest the devolution of police power and reconfiguration of police priorities that is not based on a heightened sense of justice and does not truly move beyond the criminalization of homelessness. Ultimately, I argue that even as the city seeks to decriminalize homelessness and despite the language of care and compassion, the addition of new institutions and strategies for responding to homelessness does not reflect a decreased police presence or erase the discursive construction of the homeless figure as a threat to social order.

My overarching argument is that: not incarcerating homeless people, although progressive and commendable, is not a sufficient qualification for the (de)criminalization of

homelessness given that the recognition of homeless humanity is still predicated upon the logic of threat, criminality, and pathology. The short-comings of constructive alternatives to homelessness, specifically collaborations between service providers and police officers are shaped by the failure to consider the complexities of criminalization and the penal apparatus and to attend to the mechanisms through which criminality is produced outside of the enforcement of anti-homeless ordinances.

Even as the city of Columbus has seen a decreasing number of arrests and enforcements of anti-homeless ordinances, this trend represents a devolution of policing and disciplining responsibilities across institutions. Enforcement practices previously under the purview of uniformed police officers are now carried out by community security ambassadors, private security, and service providers as well as through the securitization of the built environment. Although the actors and strategies within this network diverge from the conventional policing, these actors still emphasize the need to mitigate the possible risks and disorders associated with the homeless population.

The changing role of police practices should not be understood as a shift away from police violence (not limited to police brutality but encompassing all acts practices of law enforcement) but rather as a reconfiguration of the rules and conditions for legal violence and domination. That is, even as the embodied state, through the legal apparatus, opts to invoke a politics of care and compassion, it does so through subtle, yet violent, ascription of worthiness and belonging. In the case of Columbus, this means that individuals who are viewed through the lens of sex offender or who have not demonstrated sufficient work ethic and individual responsibility are not entitled to the same considerations for care. I am not suggesting that there is a legal text stating that: all individuals who do not sufficiently

attempt to pull themselves up by their bootstraps or are believed to have committed a sexual offense are unworthy of assistance. Rather, I contend that insofar as police officers are effectively the first-responders to homeless people on the street (Paul Coleman, Maryhaven, Interview with author, January 30, 2013), the discretionary power of officers backed by the legitimacy and authority of the law determines which bodies are made to live or let die as well as the terms on which bodies are able to live. Whether officers make the decision to transport the homeless to Netcare or Maryhaven, to tell the homeless to walk to Maryhaven because they are undeserving of transport, to take the homeless to shelter or jail, or to simply ignore the homeless or encourage them to move on, the law is determining where people belong based on knowledge it has created about this population that in many cases is a matter of life and death. I am not suggesting that service providers do not boast the same high-stakes decision-making power or that their ascription of identity and belonging does not present similar symbolic and material violences but that the penal apparatus does not support these decisions.

The unique qualities of law enforcement further complicate collaborative efforts insofar as the homeless rarely perceive officers as caring, compassionate or working towards the best interests of homeless people. Indeed, as one interviewee explained to me, "they [other service providers would be crazy to believe that they [the homeless] would ever seek out the police if they were in need of assistance even in instances as serious as rape, theft, or assault" (Becky Westerfelt, Huckleberry House, Interview with author, January 26, 2013). The police lieutenant echoed this sentiment as he explained that officers are very rarely called or waved down to assist homeless individuals (Lt. Brust, Columbus Division of Police, Interview with author, January 29, 2013). Many organizations explicitly

opt to not post officers or security guards at their organizations because it discourages people from taking advantage of their services (Anonymous youth recreational center staff, Interview with author, January 25, 2013). This means that even as law enforcement officers and service providers seek to distinguish the collaborative responses in Columbus from other cities, there is still a strong acknowledgement that the homeless are still distrustful of police, despite these efforts. In part, this is because homeless people are skeptical of and resentful toward the state more broadly and the systemic conditions that have resulted in their poverty, disenfranchisement, and present conditions of homelessness (Eugene King, Ohio Poverty Law Center, Interview with author, January 16, 2013). Further, hostility towards police has been informed by encounters prior to homelessness wherein individuals experienced harassment, physical violence racial prejudice, profiling, or otherwise unfair treatment by police officers (Becky Westerfelt, Huckleberry House, Interview with author, January 26, 2013).

By pointing to the persistent distrust of police officers by the homeless, I am not suggesting that collaboration and constructive alternatives should be abandoned or that they are wholly unsuccessful. Rather, I am suggesting that in order to develop relationships of trust and work towards truly constructive alternatives to homelessness, police practices towards the homeless cannot be decoupled from the wider carceral state and social policing practices more broadly. Indeed, the interplay of pre and post-homeless police practices has shaped the perceptions and memories of homeless people and, in some cases, service providers, and has created a situation in which those who are supposedly served by new policies are still doubtful that this is service. At the same time, I want to argue that the connection between policing the homeless and the carceral state is not inconsequential and

is mutually constitutive in practice. Indeed, one of the purported advantages of the incorporation of resources such as the Maryhaven Engagement Center and the downtown security ambassadors is that officers have more time to focus on more pressing criminal activities like drug crimes, theft, and violence (Officer Denton, Ohio State University Chief of Police, Interview with author, January 15, 2013). Put simply, the decriminalization and devolution of anti-homeless enforcement facilitates and encourages the expansion of the United States carceral state. By extension, these policies not only contribute to feelings of distrust between homeless and marginalized communities and the state but they reproduce many of the conditions that cause homelessness in the first place. As a result, insofar as the decriminalization of homelessness contributes to and legitimatizes further criminalization under the neoliberal carceral state it cannot be understood as a truly viable or constructive alternative.

The findings from this research, even as they are constituted by the particular manifestations of neoliberalism, law, and policy in Columbus, OH, present important implications for the further study of urban responses to homelessness. I argue that in order to truly gauge the (de)criminalization of the homeless, researchers and advocates must consider how criminality is reproduced outside of arrest and situate the policing of the homeless within wider social policing practices. Additionally, I want to suggest that in order to engage with the complex and reconfigured homeless landscape, research must consider not only the nature of criminality but also its relation to service. I return now to my initial framework from Wacquant to argue that the embodied state and variegated neoliberalism must be considered in order to assess the relationship between the left and right hands of the state. For Wacquant (2001), the left and right hands of the state work

together towards complementary disciplinary techniques that seek to instill the neoliberal ideals of individualism, responsibilization, and bootstrap entrepreneurialism while striving to punish or correct those who do not abide by these principles. Although the functions are complementary and work towards similar ends, I argue that Wacquant's account is over-determined and falls short insofar as it does not adequately consider that in practice their collaboration and shifting of performances make identifying a bounded left and right of the state nearly impossible. Indeed, the enrollment of police officers into crisis intervention training and the shifting role of police officers from strict enforcement to providing education to the public and partnering with service providers not only challenges the existence of a coherent street-level penality, but also suggests that the left and right hand analytics are ill-equipped to capture this complexity.

By calling for the consideration of a heightened tendency towards collaboration and a police politics of care, I am not suggesting that the division between care and punishment is wholly indistinguishable. I am merely stating that the disciplinary performances that constitute the homeless landscape cannot be clearly or consistently delineated. That sites of care and punishment are not pre-existent or self-evident is not a new insight (see Cloke et al 2008; Herbert 2001). The contribution of my research is that it considers not only the internal performances of care and punishment (i.e. how volunteers perform ethics of care or how police invoke discretion), but looks across sites to see how the overlap of knowledge and practice-based partnership change and inform these dynamics. In order to account for this nuance, research must focus not only at the conceptual nexus between sites of care and punishment but also attend to how the interplay manifest though embodied practices.

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